

September 29, 2000

Brian Brown
Assistant Regional Administrator
NMFS Northwest Region
Attn: Hydro
525 NE Oregon Street, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97232-2737

Dear Mr. Brown:

Re: Draft Biological Opinion on Operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System Including the Juvenile Transportation Program and the Bureau of Reclamation's 31 Projects, Including the Entire Columbia Basin Project, July 27, 2000

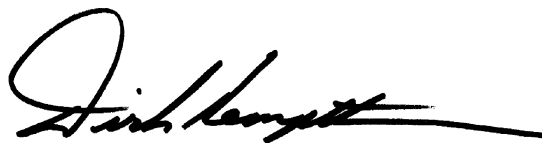
Dear Mr. Brown:

The comments of the State of Idaho on the above-referenced Biological Opinion are enclosed. Part I of the comments address Bureau of Reclamation operations, Federal Columbia River Power System ("FCRPS") Reservoir operations, and decision criteria. Part II of the comments address the jeopardy analysis and biological requirements of listed species. We intend to supplement our comments with additional materials on passage issues at mainstem FCRPS projects, off-site mitigation, and other issues discussed during planned consultations between NMFS and the State.

Much of the debate regarding the Biological Opinion has centered on proposals to breach the four federal dams on the lower Snake River. I wish to reiterate my strong opposition to the removal of the lower Snake River dams as a matter of State policy.

Thank you for providing the State an opportunity to comment on this important document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dirk Kempthorne", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

DIRK KEMPTHORNE
Governor

Enclosures

DK:lmb